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SUBJECT: PRT ANBAR: ANBAR UNIVERSITY SEEKS LINKS TO US

Classified By: PRT Anbar Acting Team Leader COL Alan Mangan
for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) This is a PRT Anbar reporting cable.

¶2. (S) Summary: At a May 1 meeting, Anbar University (AU) President Dr. Khalil Ibrahim Al Dulemy requested Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and Multinational Force (MNF-W) assistance to establish relationships with U.S. universities and colleges. Additionally, Khalil is seeking USG assistance to help replenish AU's libraries and support AU's planned Center for Strategic Studies. He underscored his commitment to AU's development when he expressed to us the frustration shared by most Anbaris with the central government's failure to supply adequate fuel and electricity. This is the first substantive meeting the PRT has had with Khalil. He is enthusiastic about increased interaction with the USG, but his concerns about security appear to temper that enthusiasm. End Summary.

Anbar University Looks to Post-Conflict Future

¶3. (SBU) Anbar University (AU) President Khalil Ibrahim Al-Dulemy told PRT and MNF-W representatives at his office in Ramadi on May 1 that he wants to establish linkages with U.S. universities and colleges beyond the nascent relationship that AU has with Texas A&M University. Even though student life has begun to return to normal, Khalil pointed to ongoing problems with GOI support, especially the lack of electricity and spotty financial flows. "We want a proper environment for our students," Khalil said, referring to these deficiencies.

¶4. (SBU) Going through a litany of administrative woes, Khalil stressed that AU needs resources for its libraries and its Center for Strategic Studies, which AU wants to open in ¶2009. With the university's three campuses in Ramadi, Fallujah, and Al Qaim hobbled by insufficient electricity, Khalil is worried that the power shortages will hinder the students' ability to sit for final exams. As expected, he inquired about USG help in filling these gaps.

¶5. (S) Khalil, a tall and striking man in middle-age, holds a doctorate in accounting from the University of Minsk and has been serving as AU's head since mid-2007. Our meeting was our first official contact by a PRT representative. In the past, Khalil restricted his contact with Coalition Forces (CF), perhaps from caution of lingering anti-CF sentiment on the campus. However, his demeanor was enthusiastic and friendly at our meeting with him, but he insisted that the meeting take place on a day when classes were not in session. Keeping a certain distance between the students and CF visitors is still apparently one of his concerns.

AU's Recent Violent History

¶6. (S) Khalil detailed Al-Qaeda's (AQI) efforts to dominate the university during the height of the insurgency. He said that several years ago, AU was likely Iraq's most violent

university system. Insurgents, he said, robbed students of their money, supplies, and even transportation. AQI reportedly killed 42 university faculty and staff, and threats prevented normal academic life. He and other faculty, staff and students often had to sneak onto the AU campus in disguise.

¶17. (S) According to Khalil, AQI controlled AU's main campus in Ramadi between 2005 and early 2007. CF fought battles there, seeking to disrupt AQI recruitment of students and to destroy insurgent IED-making & factories⁸ on the main campus. As recently as November 2007, MNF-W reported apprehending an IED cell comprised of individuals identified as AU students. In short, AU faculty, staff and students were, until recently, caught in the cross-fire between CF and insurgents.

¶18. (S) The rise of the anti-AQI tribal movement and the Awakening Council, Khalil explained, helped turn the tide of battle at the university. Today the main campus flies a banner calling on faculty and students to fight terrorism through the mind and education. An outside observer might not suspect AU's violent history. Students appear carefree moving about a campus that is busy with construction work. Classrooms are filled and lively in AU's buildings, which are suffering more from age and neglect than war damage. Khalil did note, however, that it takes time to change attitudes and Al-Qaeda will try to reassert its influence and exact revenge on CF sympathizers. The situation, Khalil warned, remains tenuous.

AU Profile

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¶19. (U) AU was founded in 1988 and today has over 14,000 students, nearly two-thirds of which are men. The vast majority of students are Sunni Arabs, mirroring the province's demographic composition. Only about one percent of the students are Shi'a. AU has a faculty numbering 1,420 and, of those, over 42 percent hold doctorates. AU boasts seventeen constituent colleges that cover a wide-spectrum of disciplines: science, education, dentistry, agriculture, business, law, liberal arts, engineering, medicine, veterinary medicine, Islamic studies, computer science, and athletic studies. In addition to Ramadi, AU has colleges Fallujah and Al Qaim.

Comment

¶10. (S) The PRT is in an early stage of building a relationship with AU. We are seeking to strengthen an existing linkage with Texas A&M University and are close to nominating two students for post-graduate training in agriculture there. We will be looking for ways to develop other cooperative initiatives with Khalil and AU. End Comment.
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